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TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECIN](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [EG](#) [IS](#) [KU](#)
SUBJECT: KUWAIT CONFIRMS CONTINUED AID TO GAZA AND
PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY

REF: A. 08 STATE 135559
[1](#)B. STATE 732
[1](#)C. KUWAIT 10

Classified By: Economic Counselor Oliver John for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: In a January 7 meeting with Econcouns, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director of International Organizations Mansour Al-Otaibi noted Kuwait's annual \$1.5 million contribution to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and its \$300 million commitment from the 2006 Paris Donors Conference, of which \$80 million has already been delivered to the World Bank for distribution. Otaibi said the GoK had directed the Kuwait Red Crescent Society(KRCS) to provide assistance to the people of Gaza in response to the current crisis. In a later meeting with Econoff, KRCS Director Barges Al-Barges said 10 tons of medical supplies had been delivered to Gaza with further relief supplies to be delivered for the foreseeable future. Barges provided documents detailing \$34 million of assistance in 2008 to the Palestinian Territories, equally divided between the West Bank and Gaza. Otaibi decried the suffering of the Gazan people and the slowness of the USG to support international calls for a cease-fire. He criticized the Israeli shelling of a UN operated school and the killing of dozens of students, stressing the need to protect UN efforts in Gaza. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Econcouns and Econoff met Mansour Al-Otaibi, Director of the International Organizations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and delivered reftel demarches on the urgent need for international humanitarian assistance to Gaza and for budgetary assistance to the Palestinian Authority. Otaibi said that the Government of Kuwait had directed the Kuwait Red Crescent Society to deliver assistance to the people of Gaza. Otaibi observed that the GoK annually contributes \$1.5 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and will continue to do so. He said that the GoK contribution to UNRWA could be increased and had been, for example, in 2008 when it reached \$2.5 million.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Otaibi criticized the January 6 Israeli shelling of a UN-operated school in Gaza which resulted in dozens of reported casualties. He said the UN Secretary General's public statement about the attacks was good but that the international response should be stronger. He supported the idea of a UN investigation of the attack but noted that a similar investigation into an Israeli attack on a UN facility during the 2006 Israeli incursion in Lebanon had resulted in a UN General Assembly decision holding Israeli responsible for the attacks, but that Israel had rejected annual UNGA resolutions calling for compensation to the victims of the attack.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Otaibi noted that he had worked at the UN for more than 10 years and said the UN-operated efforts in Gaza must be protected. He noted that the director of the attacked UN school had asserted that he was certain that there had been

no rockets fired from the school. He said that the killing of large numbers of innocent women and children would only result in more supporters of Hamas. Otaibi said while U.S. support for the Egyptian cease fire proposal was positive, he criticized the U.S. for being too slow to join international calls for a cease fire.

Request for 2009 support for Palestinian Authority

15. (U) In response to Econcouns raising the issue of the Palestinian Authority's need for budget assistance in 2009, Otaibi took the information onboard. He noted that Kuwait had already delivered \$80 million, of \$300 million committed to the PA in 2006 at the Paris Donors Conference, to the World Bank for distribution through a WB trust entity. He said that an additional \$80 million was scheduled to be delivered.

Kuwait Red Crescent Society

16. (C) Barges Al-Barges, Director of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, told Econoff that the GoK had directed the KRCS to provide assistance to the people of Gaza. Barges said that 10 tons of medical supplies had been delivered already. He added that two ambulances were to be delivered on January 8, and 350 cartons of food, each containing food supplies to last a family of 5 for a month, would be delivered on January 11. Barges said that the government had not specified the type or amount of aid to be delivered, but that the KRCS would continue aid deliveries for the foreseeable future. He

said that the KCRS identifies the type of assistance that it provides to Gaza through requests for specific types of aid from contacts in the PA Ministry of Health. He noted that he did not trust or work with the Palestinian Red Crescent, which he said favors PA families in its distribution of assistance. Barges said that the KCRS coordinated delivery of the aid through the Rafah border crossing with its embassy in Cairo and with the Egyptian Red Crescent Society.

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